

South Dakota Character Education



SD DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

May, 2004

“We can’t
control the
weather, but
we can
control the
climate.”

WEB SITE:

Children Deal With War

In this time of heightened anxiety over the war with Iraq, our children are experiencing fear and anxiety too. They’re seeing news reports and hearing people around them talk about the war and terrorist threats here at home. But unlike adults, children have little experience to help them put all this information into perspective. This website has some ideas and is sponsored by the National Mental Health Association <http://www.nmha.org/reassurance/>



Why Today’s Young People Are Viewed So Negatively

(excerpts from article by Nichols and Good in “Education Week”—4/14/2004)

Today’s young people get a bad rap. What accounts for this increasing devaluation of young people.? We believe there are four major reasons:

*Generational differences:

Their economic value to adults has changed. Modern young people generally contribute less to the economic stability and vitality of the family and society than did their counterparts in the past. People move more frequently and there are fewer face to face relations between adults and young people.

*Media Impact:

Data suggest that both entertainment and news media give the public a negative and skewed perspective of the young. Accounts of teenage violence and sloth are highly exaggerated. In an analysis of how children and adolescents were portrayed in prime-time, weekend and daytime television programs over a 15-year period, researchers found that youths were not only underrepresented in such

programs, but when they did appear, their dispositions and roles were portrayed in largely patronizing and negative terms.

*Selective Memory:

Adults tend to describe the typical teenage experience negatively because they forget what it was like to be a teenager. Many forget the impact of daily struggles of adolescence in light of all the adult responsibilities incurred over time.

*Pigeonholing:

Adults are insensitive to the range of young people’s situations. American teenage economic circumstances vary enormously, which means that they experience their teenage years in unique, individual ways.

There are, in fact, many things to celebrate about today’s “typical teenager” More American youths work and go to school here than ever before and more than youths in any other country. They are expected to do well in school,

contribute to communities, form friendships, and work toward future goals.

What is even more striking about this trend is that adult guidance and supervision has waned. Polls suggest that youth desire connections to surrounding adults and look to them for help and guidance. Yet, too many youth are left alone and don’t receive this kind of help.

The point is that today’s youth experience a unique blend of multiple pressures combined with a sharp decrease in adult help and guidance. This leads to policies designed to control and punish them, rather than to empower or help them.

Entire article available at <http://www.edweek.org/ew/ewstory.cfm?slug=31good.h23>

One Pelican Can Make a Difference

(Excerpt from chapter in book by Deb Brown, *Lessons from the Beach Chair*)

Teachers play a powerful role in charting the destiny of a child. By taking a child under his wing, a teacher can propel a student to achieve greatness within. A teacher’s greatest charge is to believe in his students until they can come to believe in themselves. I never take that responsibility lightly. It’s a joyful moment

when a parent takes time to tell me I made a positive difference in the life of his child or the treat of hearing the news years later from the student himself.

...don’t forget to spread a little sunshine into the lives of others. Life was meant to be a happy experience. Let it!

CHARACTER EDUCATION CONFERENCE SCHEDULED July 8,9, 2004

Ramkota Convention Center,
Pierre, SD

College credit offered

Keynote speakers:

Hal Urban and

Deb Austin Brown

Breakouts by representatives of districts who have good news to share about their character education efforts, and other presentations with emphasis on character education.

Information now available on
Character Education Web Site:
<http://www.state.sd.us/deca/CSCF/CEP/conference.htm>

SD DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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WE ARE ON THE WEB:

www.state.sd.us/deca/CSCF/CEP/

- Current newsletter
- Resources and other links
- Student opportunities
- Professional development

THE SD PARTNERSHIPS:

The South Dakota Character Education Partnership grant was received during the summer of 2001. The goals for the grant are:

- To establish high quality character education implementation sites that embrace the virtues that are embodied in SD Code, as well as other character traits identified by the local community, in a manner which effectively models the principles of good character through the actions of school staff and students.
- To develop the lifelong skills and ethical behaviors necessary to be contributing citizens in a democratic society by integrating character education practices within the total school and community.
- To effectively link existing local, state and federal resources that merge effective school research and character development in a caring community.
- To maintain or improve student academic achievement while expanding student understanding of, commitment to, and action upon core ethical values.

Contact people for the 10 partnership districts:

Brookings: Kathy Miller – Kathy.Miller@k12.sd.us

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Ideas that work:

Using literature is one of the ways that adults can teach children about strong character and good citizenship. In fact, people in stories, poems and plays can influence children almost as much as the real people who read with them. In talking with children about books they read, use questions such as the following to help them think about the values of the stories:

- How did the people in the story act?
- Did they have good or bad motives?
- Who were the heroes? Why?
- Were there villains?
- Did the people make good decisions? Why or why not?
- What steps did the people take to carry out their decisions?
- Were there obstacles? How did they respond to them?
- Did the people think about the welfare of others?
- Did the story have a good or bad ending?
- How could the story have turned out better for everyone?

“If we want students to become thoughtful, informed citizens, it is imperative for adults within a school community and a state to model such citizenship.”

FromSizer and Sizer's
The Students Are Watching

GRANT OPPORTUNITY:

Each year the Charles A. and Anne Morrow Lindbergh Foundation provides grants of up to \$10,580 (a symbolic amount representing the cost of the “Spirit of St. Louis”) to men and women who share the Lindberghs’ vision of a balance between the advance of technology and the preservation of the natural/human environment. Because of the standards employed by the Foundation’s grants program, it has earned international credibility that enables many Lindbergh recipients to secure additional funding to continue their important work.

The application deadline is June 10, 2004 for grants awarded in 2005. More information at: <http://www.lindberghfoundation.org/>

